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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/707,484	12/17/2003	RONALD E. GILLINGHAM	81094960 (202-1590)	1483
32242	7590	09/16/2005	EXAMINER	
DYKEMA GOSSETT PLLC 2723 SOUTH STATE STREET SUITE 400 ANN ARBOR, MI 48104			PIERCE, JEREMY R	
			ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
			1771	

DATE MAILED: 09/16/2005

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary	Application No. 10/707,484	Applicant(s) GILLINGHAM ET AL.	
	Examiner Jeremy R. Pierce	Art Unit 1771	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-21 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-10 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 11-21 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. ____. |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date ____. | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: ____. |

Handwritten marks: "15" and a signature.

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

1. Restriction to one of the following inventions is required under 35 U.S.C. 121:
 - I. Claims 1-10, drawn to a method of manufacturing a headliner, classified in class 264, subclass various.
 - II. Claims 11-21, drawn to a headliner, classified in class 442, subclass 392.

The inventions are distinct, each from the other because of the following reasons:

2. Inventions I and II are related as process of making and product made. The inventions are distinct if either or both of the following can be shown: (1) that the process as claimed can be used to make other and materially different product or (2) that the product as claimed can be made by another and materially different process (MPEP § 806.05(f)). In the instant case the product may be made by providing concave and convex contours to the top and bottom layers before molding them together.
3. Because these inventions are distinct for the reasons given above and have acquired a separate status in the art as shown by their different classification, restriction for examination purposes as indicated is proper.
4. During a telephone conversation with Jay Drouillard on September 9, 2005 a provisional election was made without traverse to prosecute the invention of Group II, claims 11-21. Affirmation of this election must be made by applicant in replying to this Office action. Claims 1-10 are withdrawn from further consideration by the examiner, 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a non-elected invention.

Information Disclosure Statement

5. Applicant has filed two Information Disclosure Statements dated December 17, 2003 and December 19, 2003, respectively. However, these two IDS are identical. The Examiner has therefore only initialed one of them to avoid duplication.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

6. The following is a quotation of the first paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall contain a written description of the invention, and of the manner and process of making and using it, in such full, clear, concise, and exact terms as to enable any person skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and use the same and shall set forth the best mode contemplated by the inventor of carrying out his invention.

7. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, first paragraph, as failing to comply with the enablement requirement. The claim(s) contains subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to which it pertains, or with which it is most nearly connected, to make and/or use the invention.

Claim 13 recites "said headliner is head impact compliant for motor vehicles without attachment of additional components on said headliner." However, the Specification does not teach what steps are required to construct a headliner so that it is head impact compliant. One can only assume that any headliner with a top and bottom layer having a cavity between their surfaces would meet the claimed limitation. The Specification is silent as to what structure the two layers need to have in order to be head impact compliant. No description is provided for the requirements of a material to be head impact compliant.

8. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

9. Claim 13 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 13 recites "said headliner is head impact compliant for motor vehicles without attachment of additional components on said headliner." What structure is implied by such a limitation? It is unclear what properties the two layers would need to possess in order to be head impact compliant for motor vehicles without attachment of additional components. The Examiner must assume that once the structure defined in claim 12 is provided by the prior art, the resulting property described in claim 13 is inherent.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

10. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

11. Claims 12-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Carroll et al. (US 2002/0017805).

Carroll et al. disclose an energy absorbing assembly (Abstract). An upper layer having contours may be combined with a lower layer having contours so that a cavity is

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formed between the two layers (Figures 13 and 15). Carroll et al. also disclose that the material meets head injury criteria (paragraph 68). With regard to claim 16, Carroll et al. teach other components that may be included in the composite, including delta structures (paragraph 57), acoustic dampeners (paragraph 60), and pellets or beads (paragraph 65). With regard to claims 17-20, the recesses are circular in nature (Figure 11) and Carroll et al. teach other shapes may be used (paragraph 43). With regard to claim 21, Carroll et al. use a thermoplastic sheet (paragraph 51).

12. Claims 12-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Wandyez (U.S. Patent No. 6,086,145).

Wandyez discloses a headliner wherein cavities are formed between the upper substrate and a lower substrate (Abstract). Both upper and lower layers have a plurality of contours (Figure 1). With regard to claims 14 and 15, both upper and lower layers have convex and concave members (Figure 3). With regard to claim 16, foam or cables may be provided in the cavities (Abstract). With regard to claims 17-20, the shape of the cavities may be rectangular or square (column 4, lines 40-49 and Figure 3). With regard to claim 21, the substrate may be plastic (column 4, line 29).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102/103

13. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

14. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Carroll et al.

With regard to claim 11, the patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. "If the product in the product-by-process claim is the same as or obvious from a product of the prior art, the claim is unpatentable even though the prior product was made by a different process." *In re Thorpe*, 777 F.2d 695, 698, (Fed. Cir. 1985). Once the examiner provides a rationale tending to show that the claimed product appears to be the same or similar to that of the prior art, although produced by a different process, the burden shifts to applicant to come forward with evidence establishing an unobvious difference between the claimed product and the prior art product. *In re Marosi*, 710 F.2d 798, 802, 218 USPQ 289, 292 (Fed. Cir. 1983). In this case, Carroll et al. disclose all physical and structural limitations of the product claim.

15. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Wandyez.

With regard to claim 11, the patentability of a product does not depend on its method of production. In this case, Wandyez disclose all physical and structural limitations of the product claim.


Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jeremy R. Pierce whose telephone number is (571)

272-1479. The examiner can normally be reached on normal business hours, but works flextime hours.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Terrel Morris can be reached on (571) 272-1478. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).


Jeremy R. Pierce
September 12, 2005


ELIZABETH M. COLE
PRIMARY EXAMINER